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S 1048/US

TITLE OF THE INVENTION

**ARTICLE OF CLOTHING**

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25016

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## ARTICLE OF CLOTHING

### CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is based upon French Patent Application No. 03.04440, filed April 10, 2003, the disclosure of which is hereby incorporated by reference thereto in its entirety and the priority of which is hereby claimed under 35 U.S.C. §119.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to an article of clothing having at least one extensible portion.

#### 2. Description of Background and Relevant Information

[0003] Garments of the above-mentioned type are known to be used for sporting activities, particularly garments such as shorts or thigh-pieces, or pants, or tops covering the torso.

[0004] Indeed, the elastic materials used in such garments allow for a good support for the wearer's muscles during sports activity. Depending on the type of material used, they also facilitate proprioceptive sensing that can be useful for the particular sports activity, and they can also guarantee a certain degree of warmth for the muscles.

[0005] However, because they are made of elastic materials, these garments fit snugly and can provide an undesirable visual appearance, particularly if the wearer has an

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unflattering physical appearance such as being overweight, for example, or if the wearer simply does not desire a snugly fitted appearance.

[0006] Moreover, it is difficult to wear garments of this type for purposes other than sporting activities.

[0007] To overcome these drawbacks, it is known to superimpose several garments, the one made of an elastic material fitting snugly, such as a thigh-piece, and another, fitting more loosely, such as shorts.

[0008] This practice is common with certain athletes, such as soccer players, rugby players, or runners. It has the drawback of requiring two garments, and of increasing the risks of wear of the loose garment in the friction zones, especially in the crotch area in the case of shorts or pants. Furthermore, the outer loose garment can generate unpleasant or undesirable sounds in the friction zones, depending upon the material(s) of which it is made, and the superimposition of two layers of materials in certain zones, and especially in the crotch area, can generate excessive heating.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] An object of the present invention is to overcome the aforementioned drawbacks and to provide an article of clothing that allows combining a pleasant aesthetic outer appearance and good support and/or heating of the muscles, and/or a proprioceptive effect.

[0010] These objects are achieved in the article of clothing having at least one extensible portion according to the invention, whereby the article of clothing comprises a snugly fitting inner portion having at least one connecting band extending along at least one limb (arm, leg, neck) of the body, and of a loosely fitting outer portion covering the

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inner portion, and whereby the inner portion and the outer portion are assembled together by the connecting band extending along at least one limb.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0011] The invention will be better understood, and other characteristics thereof will become apparent from the following description, as well as with reference to the annexed schematic drawings showing several embodiments, by way of non-limiting examples, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a front view of an article of clothing, such as shorts, incorporating the invention;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line II-II of FIG. 1;

FIG.3 is a view, similar to FIG. 1, showing a second embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 4 is a view, similar to FIG. 1, showing a fourth embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 5 is a view, similar to FIG. 1, showing a fifth embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 6 is a detailed view of FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is a detailed view, similar to FIG. 6, according to a sixth embodiment of the invention.

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0012] FIGS. 1 and 2 show an article of clothing of the shorts type incorporating the invention.

[0013] These shorts 1 are comprise two portions, namely:

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- inner snugly fitting shorts 10 made at least partially of an elastic material such as that known by the registered marks "LYCRA<sup>®</sup>" or "LYCRA POWER<sup>®</sup>," polyamide, or made of a breathable or elastic mesh-type material; and
- outer loosely fitting shorts 20 made of a non-elastic material, such as Nylon, or made of a breathable material of the mesh-type.

[0014] The inner shorts 10 have a waist 11 and two legs 12.

[0015] Each leg 12 includes a tubular, or partially cylindrical, portion 13, having semi-cylindrical or partially cylindrical shape, the portion 13 comprising an elastic material. Each leg 12 also includes a connecting band 14 covering the crotch area. The connecting band 14 can be made of an elastic material, or rather of a non-extensible material.

[0016] The outer shorts 20 also have a waist 21 and two substantially tubular portions each comprising a leg 22.

[0017] As shown clearly in FIG. 2, each leg 22 of the outer shorts is assembled to the associated leg 12 of the inner shorts 10 along the edges 14a of the connecting band 14 by means of seams 15, such as stitching.

[0018] As a result, the two inner 10 and outer 20 shorts in fact have a common portion in the form of the connecting band 14 in the crotch area.

[0019] Thus, friction that could otherwise generate noise and wear between the two legs of the loosely fitting outer shorts 20 during use is avoided.

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[0020] Furthermore, a good aesthetic appearance of the loosely fitting shorts 20 is guaranteed, because the snugly fitting inner shorts 10 remain hidden, or mostly hidden, by the outer shorts.

[0021] In a particular embodiment, the legs 12 of the inner shorts are not longer than those of the outer shorts, in order to prevent any visual impression of a snug fit.

[0022] However, it is contemplated according to the invention that they can be slightly shorter so as not to overlap the outer shorts.

[0023] It is noted that the connection of the two shorts to one another is particularly important in this context, in order to prevent a relative slip of the legs during the sporting activity and to maintain the visual appearance of the loosely fitting shorts.

[0024] The inner shorts can also be provided to have longer legs 12 than those of the outer shorts if a mixed visual appearance is desired.

[0025] In a particular embodiment, the waists 11, 22 of the shorts 10, 20 are separate, and the shorts are therefore only connected to one another by the crotch, so as to guarantee a better adaptation to the wearer's movements. As a result, the outer shorts do not hinder the movements of the inner shorts.

[0026] However, as shown in FIG 1, detachable connectors 30, or connecting mechanisms, such as buttons or snap fasteners, can be provided to tie the waists 11 and 21 together and in particular to enable the double shorts 1 to be put on easily.

[0027] As the case may be, the connectors 30 can also be provided to be permanent. In that case, it will be a seam, etc., such as stitching.

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[0028] According to a particular embodiment, the connectors 30 are constituted by connecting straps, such that the inner shorts 10 somewhat hang, or are suspended, within the outer shorts 20. In this case, the straps are preferably made of an elastic material in order to better follow the movements of the wearer.

[0029] The connecting band 14 of the crotch can have a substantially rectangular shape, or a triangular shape, for example, depending on the cut of one or both shorts 10, 20.

[0030] The connecting band 14 can be provided in the form of a yoke that is distinct from the inner shorts 10 as shown in FIGS. 1 or 2, or, on the contrary, it can be an integral part of each leg 12, these legs then being made, for example, by knitting. This is especially the case when the connecting band 14 is made of an elastic material.

[0031] In the case where each band 14 is constituted by a distinct yoke, it can be made either of the same material as the associated leg 12, or of a different material, and, in particular, a non-elastic material. As the case may be, the material can also be a breathable material of the mesh-type or the perforated fabric-type, for a better ventilation.

[0032] FIG. 3 shows pants 101, for which similar or identical portions/elements are designated by the same reference numerals used in FIGS. 1 and 2 increased by 100.

[0033] In the case of FIG. 3, the pants also have inner pants 110 provided with a waist 111 and legs 112, and outer pants 120 provided with a waist 121 and legs 122.

[0034] As mentioned above, detachable connectors 130 are provided in the crotch area by a common connecting band 114, which can be made of an elastic material.



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[0035] FIG. 4 shows another application of the present invention to an article of clothing 201 such as a jacket, a sweater, etc., i.e., covering the upper portion of the body.

[0036] In this case, the top 201, as previously mentioned, has a snugly fitting inner top 210 and a loosely fitting outer top 220.

[0037] As mentioned above, each top 210, 220 has a collar 211, 221 respectively, and sleeves 212, 222, respectively, as well as a bust or torso portion 213, 223, respectively.

[0038] As mentioned above, these two tops 210, 220 are independent of one another, except in the area of the sleeves 212, 222 adapted to cover the wearer's arms.

[0039] In this case, the sleeves 212, 222 are connected to one another by a connecting band 214 in the area of their lower portion, i.e., located on the side of the bust 213, 223.

[0040] This connecting band 214 is preferably extended by a connecting portion 216 in the zone of the corresponding bust, i.e., in the armpit area.

[0041] As in the case of the shorts or pants previously described, these connecting bands 214, 216 are located in a friction zone, and the previously mentioned problems related to wear and noise are avoided.

[0042] As mentioned above, removable connectors 230 can be provided between the two collars 211, 221. In the example shown, the collar 211 is low, whereas the collar 221 is high. The collar 221 could also be low, or the collar 221 could also be high.

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**[0043]** FIGS. 5 and 6 show another example of application of the present invention to a top 300. In these figures, similar elements are designated by the same reference numerals as in FIG. 4, increased by 100.

**[0044]** The main difference with respect to the embodiment of FIG. 4 lies in the fact that the connecting band 314 between the sleeves 312, 322 respectively, extends over the upper portion of the sleeves 312, 322, respectively, and is extended on the collar by a connecting band 316.

**[0045]** A connection is thus obtained between the inner garment and the outer garment, not only in the area of the sleeves but also in the area of each side of the collar.

**[0046]** In the example shown, the two collars 311, 321 are high; they could also be lower, the connecting band 316 being more reduced in this case.

**[0047]** In the embodiment shown in FIG. 7, in which similar or identical elements are designated by the same reference numerals increased by 100, the elastic connecting band 414 extends in the back of the garment, preferably, but in a non-limiting manner, in a median zone of the latter, thus connecting the portions 413, 423 covering the bust.

~~**[0048]** It is extended in the area of the collar by a connecting band 416 that also connects the inner collar 411 and the outer collar 421.~~

**[0049]** As previously mentioned, the visual appearance of a loose garment is nevertheless preserved, this appearance being particularly important when seen from the front.

**[0050]** The present invention is not limited to the particular embodiments described hereinabove and shown in the drawings by way of non-limiting examples, but encompasses

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all of the embodiments that are similar or equivalent and/or aim at solving the same problems.

**[0051]** In particular, in all examples shown, the sleeves, legs, bust, collars, etc., of the garments shown can have various lengths. Similarly, the connecting bands can be made of an elastic or non-elastic material, without leaving the scope of the present invention.